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Phonology and Grammar of Nheengatú

Aline da Cruz

This work describes the Nheengatú language, a modern variety of the Amazonian *lingua geral*, which evolved from Tupinambá (Tupi-Guarani, sub-group III). It is spoken in the Upper Rio Negro in the northwest Amazons of Brazil by the Baré, Baniwa, and Warekena peoples who have replaced their traditional northern Arawak languages with Nheengatú. The work consists of a total of 11 chapters distributed into three parts: Phonology, Morphology, and Syntax.

The first part describes the consonantal and vocalic phonemes, as well as the diphthongs. It also treats the syllable structure, the realization of stress, the word structure, and the morphophonological processes. In addition, there is a small discussion dedicated to aspects relating to the convergence between Nheengatú and the languages of the Arawak substratum.

The second part deals with morphology and in particular it focuses on the description of lexical classes. First, we describe the criteria that differentiate nouns and verbs. Then, we describe the properties of the nouns and the division into different subclasses. Afterwards, we do the same for the verbs. We end the discussion on nouns and verbs by showing that the difference between them allows for the categorization of lexical items with a descriptive meaning as stative verbs. Finally, we close the lexical classes chapter with a proposition for a class of adverbs. The morphology part contains three more chapters: noun phrase, verbal lexical genesis and grammatical classes. The noun phrase chapter focuses on the uses of nouns phrases with and without determiners. In verbal lexical genesis adjustments of valence, reduplication and verbal loans are described. The final chapter of Morphology closes with a survey and description of particles and clitics.

The third part describes the syntax and investigates the predicate types of Nheengatú along with the properties of subordinate and coordinate clauses. It analyzes the properties of nominal, verbal, and existential predicates. Special attention is given to the properties of existential predicates, and the split between dynamic and stative in intransitive verbal predicates.

Finally, the work investigates the information structure based on the distinction betweenthetic and categorical judgments. From this perspective we discuss the possibilities of word order in intransitive sentences, and left movement in transitive sentences. We also observe that the order of constituents in nominal sentences allows for the distinction between equative nominal predicates, and inclusive nominal predicates.